

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 561

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to commend Yo! Memphis for outstanding service to the youth of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable organizations that have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Yo! Memphis is one such worthy group, which evinces the greatest integrity and probity in its mission to help youth transition into successful adulthood; and

WHEREAS, founded as one of thirty-six youth opportunity sites with United States Department of Labor grant funds in July 2000, Yo! Memphis has been recognized as one of the top five youth programs in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the programs' goals are to increase high school completion rates, place youth in post-secondary education or occupational skills training, and to provide long-term employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, since 2000, over 3,500 youth have enrolled through Yo! Memphis; 786 have graduated from high school, 213 have achieved GEDs, 647 have enrolled in college, 107 have graduated from college, 667 have entered skills training programs, 379 have earned training certificates, and 1,764 have been employed; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these impressive statistics, 98.8% of high school students enrolled in the program have remained in school until completion; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of the grant funding ending on June 30, 2005, a non-profit organization, the Yo! Memphis Foundation, was established in November of 2003 to sustain the program components; and

WHEREAS, Yo! Memphis now operates Yo! Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, the show choir, the dance team, and the Summer Camp for Kids; the Foundation also recently sponsored a personal responsibility symposium for the community with Dr. Bill Cosby; and

WHEREAS, the Yo! Academy is a fully-operational secondary school that ensures a quality education for at-risk high school students and fosters academic achievement through a focus on visual and performing arts; the Academy sends at least five students to college preparatory schools and five students to art camps for extended study each summer, and the 2006 Valedictorian was a semi-finalist on *American Idol*; and

WHEREAS, the Yo! Memphis Show Choir is a select performing group that provides fifty youth, ages fourteen through twenty-one, with musical development in an environment that promotes commitment and discipline; the choir has performed at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem and for former President Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, and Memphis Mayor Dr. Willie Herenton; and

WHEREAS, in less than seven years, Yo! Memphis, along with its stellar efforts that include the Yo! Academy and the Yo! Memphis Show Choir, has become one of the most highly-respected civil groups in the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Yo! Memphis is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and its membership should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Yo! Memphis for its outstanding efforts on behalf of the youth of Tennessee and extend our best wishes for its every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.